

Fiscal Highlights

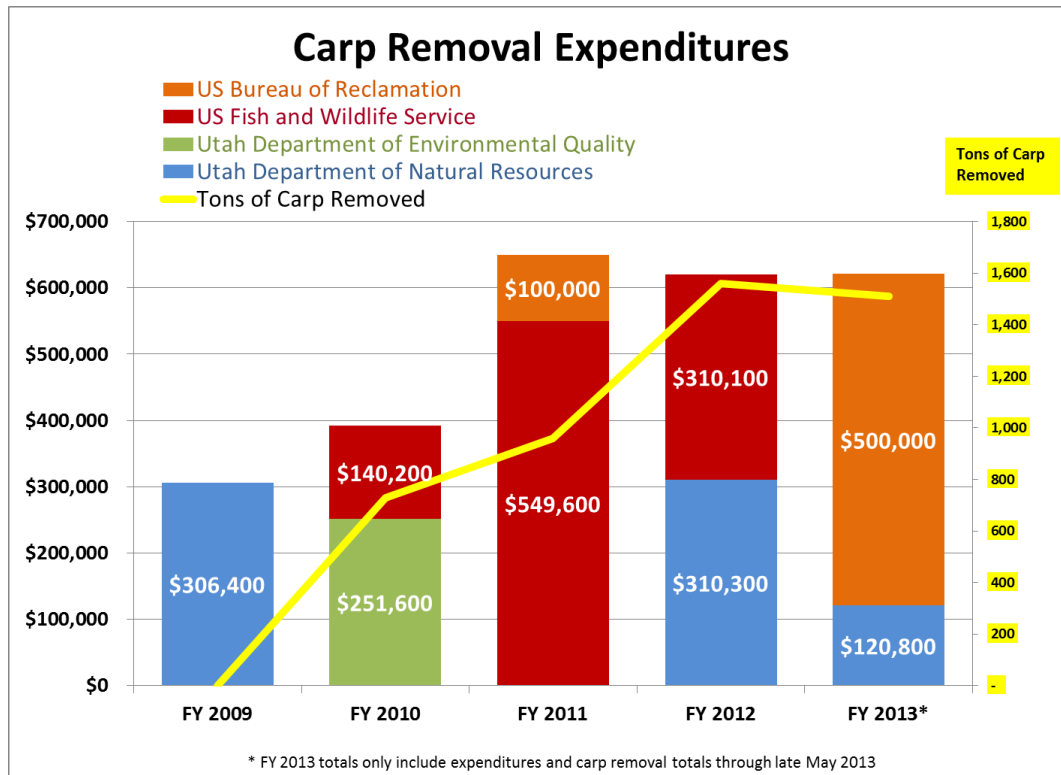
\$2.6 Million Spent on Carp Removal So Far, What Are The Results? - Ivan D. Djambov

The carp is identified as the greatest obstacle for recovering the endangered June Sucker in Utah Lake. Carp are nonnative fish introduced to the Utah Lake in the 1880s, and are now estimated to comprise nearly 90% of the biomass of the lake. The carps aggressive foraging has altered the lakes ecosystem. Scientific research indicates that in order to reverse the negative impact of carp on a shallow lake, such as Utah Lake, the carp population has to be reduced by 75%. A study in 2008 estimated that the lake had 21,440 tons of carp.

The Department of Natural Resources, through its Species Protection Program, has partnered with other state and federal agencies to fund a carp removal project. The management has identified that if they remove 2,500 tons (5 million pounds) of carp per year, the 75% reduction goal can be reached in seven years.



The program has contracted with Loy Fisheries, a commercial fishing operation, and is paying \$.20 per pound for the removed carp. The figure below provides the actual expenditures, the agency providing the funding, and the tons of carp removed each year.

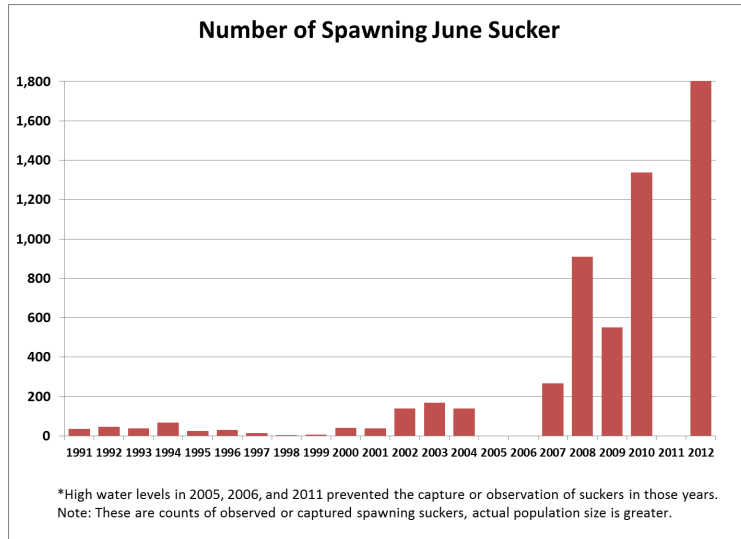


As of end of May, 2013, the carp removal program has spent \$2.6 million. More than one half of the total funding, \$1.6 million, has come through federal agencies (\$1 million from the US Fish and Wildlife Services and \$600,000 from the US Bureau of Reclamation). The remaining \$1 million was provided by the State of Utah (\$737,500 from the Department of Natural Resources and \$251,600 from the Department of Environmental Quality). The total funding committed for carp removal for FY 2014 is \$1 million.

The amount of carp removed per year has been significantly less than the initially anticipated. The main limitation has been the capacity of the commercial fisherman. Managers reported that they have been working with the contractor to increase the catch and reach in FY 2014 their target of 2,500 tons per year.

The total amount of carp removed between FY 2009 and FY 2013 is 6,300 tons. This is 30% of the total carp population in the lake estimated in 2008 (21,440 tons of carp). However, there is a possibility that the carp may have been responding to the removal process by increasing its reproduction rate, and the total amount of carp in 2013 may be very close to what it was in 2008. The program has not been monitoring the carp population on a regular basis. A study conducted by the Utah State University is scheduled to provide by the end of this summer an estimate on the carp population in Utah Lake.

The reduction of carp in the lake is identified as one of the main components in the recovery plan for the June Sucker. The program has reported that the number of the endangered fish has been increasing. The figure below shows the number of observed or captured spawning June Sucker in the Provo River and Hobbie Creek as reported by the Division of Wildlife Resources.



The June Sucker numbers have drastically increased since 2007, which in part may be due to the reduction of carp in the lake. The Endangered Species Program has been trying to identify viable options for funding the carp removal and the recovery of the June Sucker. However, due to potential decline in federal funding, as well as other financial factors, the funding for the carp removal in the future is uncertain.